

### **Activity 1: Analyzing Errors**

Rod Serling's teleplay, "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street," is based on a common error in reasoning. The characters jump to conclusions about their neighbors on the basis of mere suspicions; they have no evidence. Analyzing their hasty conclusions will help you understand something about their mob mentality.

Make a three-column chart about the conclusions expressed by the residents of Maple Street. In the first column, write a list of conclusions reached by the various characters about their neighbors and the mysterious events on their block. In the second column, identify the event or idea that led the character to this conclusion. In the third column, explain whether he or she based his conclusion on reasonable evidence, and why.

### **Activity 2: Abstraction**

At the end of Serling's teleplay, the narrator says:

The tools of conquest do not necessarily come with bombs and explosions and fallout. There are weapons that are simply thoughts, attitudes, prejudices—to be found only in the minds of men. . . . A thoughtless, frightened search for a scapegoat has a fallout all its own.

In their desperate efforts to explain and protect themselves from the mysterious events in their neighborhood, the residents of Maple Street reach for a scapegoat—an innocent figure to take the blame.

Think of another situation where people have turned to a scapegoat in an attempt to solve their problems. There have been many times in history when a society has made a scapegoat out of a person or group; you might also think of a situation in your personal experience in which an innocent person has been made to take the blame. Write a brief paragraph about the situation and discuss it with your classmates.